DISPOSITION OF NAVY ☆ MARINE CORPS ☆ ☆ AND COAST GUARD WORLD WAR II DEAD ☆ ☆ ☆

DISPOSITION OF NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD WORLD WAR II DEAD

THIS PAMPHLET IS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE NEXT OF KIN OF ALL WORLD WAR II AMERICAN DEAD OF NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD NOW BURIED OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

NAVY DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

FOREWORD

THE Congress of the United States has authorized the Secretary of War to proceed with return of World War II American dead. The Quartermaster General of the Army has completed the plans necessary for carrying out all feasible wishes of the next of kin. The remains of our World War II dead may be returned to their homeland or interred in an American military cemetery overseas.

The information contained in the succeeding pages is published so that you as the next of kin may become fully acquainted with your rights under law and learn of the provisions made by the Quartermaster General to carry out your desires. This pamphlet covers practically every point of information necessary for your guidance in the matter of determining and expressing your wishes. Should you have a question which is not answered in the following pages send

it to the branch of service to which the deceased belonged at the time of his death. (See "Correspondence" on p. 17.) Every effort will be made to comply with all reasonable requests of the next of kin.

OPTIONS TO BE GIVEN NEXT OF KIN

Option No. 1

The remains to be interred in a permanent American military cemetery overseas.

The establishment of permanent American military cemeteries overseas in the European and Pacific areas is contemplated. (See p. 5.)

Option No. 2

The remains to be returned to the United States, or any possession or territory thereof, for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery.

Shipment will be made to the city or town designated by the next of kin. (See p. 7.)

Option No. 3

The remains to be returned to a foreign country, the homeland of the deceased or next of kin, for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery.

Shipment to a foreign country is dependent upon the ability of the United States Government to obtain entry and reinterment authority therein. If authority can be obtained, shipment will be made to the city or town designated by the next of kin. (See p. 9.)

Option No. 4

The remains to be returned to the United States for final interment in a national cemetery.

When this option is desired, the remains will be transported to the continental United States and interred in a national cemetery selected by the next of kin. However, burial in the national cemetery desired is subject to availability of space therein. (See p. 10.)

Cremation

If cremation of the remains is desired, specific request that the remains be cremated should be made on page 2 of the form "Request for Disposition of Remains," in the block titled, "Remarks and Additional Instructions." The request should include a statement as to whether the next of kin desires to arrange for private cremation services or wishes the Government to make necessary cremation arrangements. Upon receipt of this request a letter pertaining to the Government procedure to carry out the wishes of the next of kin in this respect will be forwarded to the next of kin from the Office of the Quartermaster General.

Alternate Choice

If the options described above do not provide for your wish, you may submit your specific request to the branch of the service to which the deceased belonged at the time of his death. (See "correspondence" on p. 17.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OPTIONS GIVEN

All Options

On all options, all costs of exhumation, preparation of remains, casketing, and shipment to the city or town designated by next of kin, or his duly authorized representative, will be borne by the Government of the United States. In all cases the Government will provide a flag of the United States to be used for proper draping of the casket during interment services. If next of kin of the deceased, or authorized representative, is present at the time of final interment, this burial flag will be presented. Otherwise, this burial flag will be forwarded to the next of kin.

Option 1. Permanent American Military Cemeteries Overseas

The establishment of permanent American military cemeteries overseas in the European area and the Pacific area is contemplated. These cemeteries which are to

be established abroad will be beautified, and permanently cared for by the United States Government. To assist the next of kin in determining the place of final interment, a pamphlet describing permanent American military cemeteries abroad, and national cemeteries in the United States, is enclosed. All expenses incident to burial in permanent American military cemeteries will be paid by the Government. When request is made that the remains be interred in such cemeteries, they will be removed from their temporary burial location, prepared for reburial, casketed, transferred to the site of final interment, and reburied there. An Army chaplain will conduct appropriate religious service at the time of this reburial. The location of the permanent burial site will then be communicated to you. A temporary inscribed grave marker (*cross* or *Star of David*), will identify the grave until it can be replaced by the Government with an approved type inscribed headstone.

Option 2. Private Cemetery in United States

If option 2 is selected, in addition to the expenses outlined above, the Government will contribute a sum not to exceed $50 toward the defrayment of actual burial expenses. Costs or expenses in excess of this amount must be borne by the person who contracts for the services. Funeral services at a private cemetery must be arranged by the next of kin including arrangements for a local undertaker to meet the train, convey, and care for the remains until final interment has been made.

Local veterans organizations or the State Guard may be contacted for assistance in arranging for such military rites as may be desired. These organizations will cooperate insofar as their facilities permit. Arrangements for the burial plot are the responsibility of the next of kin.

In every case where the remains are to be shipped home for private burial, the authorities at the distribution center will tele-

graph the person or firm the next of kin has designated as the consignee authorized to receive the remains, giving the date, route, and scheduled time of arrival. This telegram will be sent sufficiently in advance of the prospective arrival of the remains at destination to permit time for making any final arrangements necessary in connection with the burial.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the city or town designated by the next of kin and will be instructed to obtain the signature of the next of kin, funeral director, or other designated representative of next of kin, in receipt for the remains. If the next of kin requests the escort to remain for the funeral services, the escort will be permitted to remain for a period not to exceed 72 hours from the time he arrives with the remains. The escort will deliver appropriate printed instructions regarding the manner of submitting claim for the Government allowance of $50 toward defrayment of actual burial expenses.

Option 3. Private Cemetery Overseas

If option 3 is selected, in addition to those services provided for all options, the Government will allow a sum not to exceed $50 toward the defrayment of actual burial expenses. Costs or expenses in excess of this amount must be borne by the person who contracts for the services. Next of kin must arrange for burial plot and for such funeral services as may be desired. The Government will provide assistance in obtaining medical clearance and reinterment authority.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the city or town designated by the next of kin and will be instructed to obtain the signature of the next of kin, funeral director, or other designated representative of next of kin, in receipt for the remains.

Upon application to the Office of the Quartermaster General, Memorial Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C., after interment, the next of kin will be furnished appropriate instructions regarding

the manner of submitting claim for reimbursement of a sum not to exceed $50 to cover expenses incurred during final interment.

Option 4. United States National Cemetery

National cemeteries were first established in the continental United States in 1864, in honor of and to provide final resting places for deceased members of the armed forces. To assist the next of kin in determining the place of final interment, a pamphlet describing permanent American military cemeteries abroad, and national cemeteries in the United States, is enclosed. If the deceased was a member of the armed forces of the United States, the option, "Interment in a national cemetery in the United States," authorizes selection as the site for final interment, a national cemetery which is open for burials. A listing of these cemeteries which are open for additional burials, is enclosed. Burial in the national cemetery selected from this listing is subject to avail-

ability of space therein at the time completed reply form is received.

Remains may be shipped direct to the selected national cemetery for funeral services and interment; or, remains may be shipped to a place designated by you for private funeral services and thence to a national cemetery for interment. In the latter case, the Government will be responsible for transportation cost in an amount not to exceed the travel expense otherwise necessary to move the remains to the national cemetery by a direct route from the distribution center.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the national cemetery selected, or to the city or town designated by next of kin if it is desired that the remains be shipped to another place for religious services prior to interment in the selected national cemetery. In the latter case, the escort, if so requested by next of kin, will be permitted to remain for the services for a period not to exceed 72 hours from the time he arrives with the remains. The escort will be instructed to

obtain signature of next of kin, funeral director, or other designated representative of the next of kin, in receipt for the remains. Provision for transportation of the remains and for an attendant to accompany the remains from the place where services were held to the selected national cemetery is an obligation of the next of kin.

When interment in a national cemetery is your choice, there will be no cost to you for the grave site, the opening of the grave or the actual interment and closing of the grave. Also as stated previously, the Government approved type of inscribed headstone will be erected at no cost to you.

Identity of Deceased

Prior to the registering of a grave overseas as containing the remains of a designated (by name) member of the armed forces of the United States, every means possible was employed and every known method was pursued to establish definitely and positively the identity of the deceased. In this respect, no effort was considered to be too great and meticulous attention was given

to smallest details. Identity having been thus established, evidence of identity was buried with the remains and inscribed on the grave marker. If removal and reburial elsewhere become necessary, all records will again be checked and all evidence of identity again examined. Military personnel especially trained in this procedure supervise and directly control these operations. Also, from the time of exhumation of the remains until their reception by the next of kin, they will be under constant protection of military escorts. Thus, when the manner of final disposition of the remains of a certain member of the armed forces of the United States is requested of the next of kin, he and all others may rest assured that the identity of the remains has been definitely established.

General Questions and Answers

Realizing that there will be a number of general questions arising in the minds of the next of kin, the following questions and answers are set forth.

Question (1): If the widow of a deceased military person has remarried since death,

will she still have authority to direct the final disposition of his remains?

Answer: When the widow of a deceased military person remarries she loses her right to direct the final disposition of her former husband's remains. Under such circumstances the remarried widow should inform the service concerned by letter and furnish the names and addresses of surviving blood relations if known to her.

Question (2): What type of caskets will the Government use?

Answer: The United States Government has designed a special all-metal casket which will be hermetically sealed. This casket will be used in all cases, no distinction being made for rank, rate, or service. The next of kin will realize that, for the most part, burials overseas were made under battle conditions and that many months have elapsed since death. Consequently, the remains will not be in a condition to be viewed by the family or public. The sealed casket, therefore, should not be opened. If the remains are transferred to another casket the cost

of such casket will not be borne by the Government.

Question (3): If the next of kin does not wish a Government approved type headstone but wishes to erect a private stone will the Government grant a monetary allowance in lieu of such Government headstone?

Answer: No money allowance in lieu of Government approved type headstone may be paid.

Question (4): Can the next of kin relinquish authority to dispose of the remains to some other person who has agreed to assume this responsibility?

Answer: Yes. The authority for controlling the disposition of the remains may be delegated by the next of kin to another responsible person who has agreed to assume the responsibility of claiming the remains, by completing part II of the "Application for the Final Disposition of Overseas Dead" and returning it in the accompanying envelope which requires no postage.

Question (5): If the body is being returned for private burial how will the next of kin know when preparation for receiving

the remains and making funeral arrangements should be made?

Answer: The next of kin will be notified by telegram when the body has arrived in the United States. When final shipment is made from the distribution center in this country, the next of kin will again be notified by telegram of the date of shipment, name of railroad with train number, giving the probable date and hour of arrival at destination. This dispatch will be the final notification to the next of kin and will allow ample time to make final arrangements to have the remains cared for by the local funeral director. Frequently trains are delayed en route and it is a good policy to set the date of the funeral a day or two after the date of the scheduled arrival.

Question (6): When the remains are consigned direct to the superintendent of a national cemetery in the United States may the next of kin attend the funeral and will the Government pay the cost of transportation of relatives to attend such burials?

Answer: When the remains are shipped direct to a national cemetery for burial and

the next of kin desires to attend the funeral the superintendent of the cemetery will set the date and hour of burial and notify the next of kin sufficiently in advance to allow ample time for them to attend the funeral if they so desire. The cost of transportation of relatives to attend funerals in national cemeteries cannot be paid by the Government.

Correspondence

The following information is set forth for the guidance of the next of kin in writing letters to the Government regarding matters relating to the return of the dead of World War II.

1. Correspondence relating to a deceased member of the United States Navy, except as stated in paragraph 4 following, should be addressed to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington 25, D. C.

2. Correspondence relating to a deceased member of the United States Marine Corps, except as stated in paragraph 4 following, should be addressed to the Director of Per-

sonnel, Marine Corps, Casualty Division, Washington 25, D. C.

3. Correspondence relating to a deceased member of the United States Coast Guard, except as stated in paragraph 4 following, should be addressed to the Commandant, United States Coast Guard, Washington 25, D. C.

4. Correspondence regarding headstones or grave markers, reimbursement of funeral expenses at the home, and flags used for draping the caskets should be addressed to the Memorial Division, Office of the Quartermaster General, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

Preparation of "Application for Final Disposition of Overseas Dead"

You have now completed the reading of this pamphlet prepared for your guidance. If you have made your decision regarding the ultimate disposition you wish made of the remains of your deceased relative you should complete the "Application for Final Disposition of Overseas Dead" forwarded

with this pamphlet and return it promptly in the attached self-addressed envelope, which requires no postage. The options in this pamphlet and the application form have been arranged in the same order for your convenience.

The repatriation of American dead is a tremendous undertaking and one that will require many months to complete. It will proceed in an orderly manner, area by area, from all parts of the world. While prompt action in completing the application is strongly stressed, in order that the Department may have a complete record of the wishes of all the next of kin before the work is started, it will not be necessary for you to make funeral arrangements until you have been notified as set forth in question 5 of this pamphlet. In no case, however, should the return of the application be delayed over 30 days.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1946

DEDICATION

In deep and everlasting appreciation of the heroic efforts of those who, in keeping their country free, made the supreme sacrifice in World War II—the entire Nation has been dedicated to disposing of the mortal remains of those honored dead, in a manner consistent with the wishes of their next of kin.

Harry Truman

PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

NAVY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA